

Quill

A letter-writing roleplaying game for a single player



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What is Quill?



Quill is a roleplaying game for one person – you. In a roleplaying game, players usually step into the shoes of different characters and, as the word suggests, play out the role of that character through a story. Usually roleplaying games are played by a group of people, but Quill is different for that reason and many others.

In a game of Quill, you will take on the role of a letter-writer, who, for whatever reason, is scribing a letter to a recipient. Like other roleplaying games, you have a series of attributes that determine how well your character can accomplish certain tasks. However, instead of having statistics like strength or wisdom, Quill characters have very special attributes – Penmanship, Language and Heart. Like in other games, each attribute is important and will be used to carry out actions – but in Quill you won't be rolling for combat or to see how far you can jump – you will be rolling to see how eloquent you write and how much you can impress your recipient. In addition, you won't be playing this with a group – Quill is played alone.

This may sound confusing at first as it is so far removed from many other traditional games on the market, but through Quill you will find the freedom to tell your own stories through different scenarios.

In a typical game of Quill the aim is to impress your recipient into responding favourably to

your letter. You will accomplish this through deft use of language and presentation, rolling dice to determine whether or not you succeed in using the right words, the best descriptors and the most beautiful penmanship. Once you have completed your letter – one which you will actually physically write yourself – you will count up your total score and discover how your letter has been received.

What do you need to play?

Very simply, you will need at least three six-sided dice (d6), some paper to write on, a pen or pencil and one of the scenarios from this book. It might be a good idea to go to your favourite quiet spot and pouring yourself a nice hot drink before playing.

What is the setting for Quill?

Quill's default setting is a quasi-medieval land with some light fantasy elements. However, future scenarios may be set elsewhere.

Choose your character

Before you play a game of Quill you will select a character from the list below. Each character has their own individual strengths and weaknesses. These are represented by the attributes: Penmanship, Language and Heart.

- **Penmanship** determines how beautiful your writing is. Good penmanship can make a letter look pleasing to the eye of the recipient.
- **Language** determines how eloquent you are. Having a high language score shows that you have a fine grasp of your native lexicon.
- **Heart** determines how much effort you put into your letters. The higher your heart, the more of your soul you can pour into your writing.

Each attribute is rated Poor, Average, or Good, each of which determines how many dice you roll. Poor = 1 die, Average = 2 dice and Good = 3 dice.

Once you have selected your character, you will choose a skill. A skill will give you an edge when you need it, but you may only use a skill once per scenario.

The Monk

The holiest of people, monks come from all walks of life, whether they are rich or poor. Monks devote their life to the teachings of their deity, living a secluded, quiet life in the monastery. Monks must take three vows that they keep sacred - the Vow of Poverty, the Vow of Chastity and the Vow of Obedience. Monks are very well respected in society.

Monks have excellent penmanship, having been taught the art in the monastery. However, they tend to write matter-of-factly.

The female version of the monk is the nun.

Penmanship: Good
Language: Average
Heart: Poor



The Knight

The knight is the bastion of chivalry and romance. Tales are told of great knights and their bravery in the battlefield.

Knights embark upon grand quests, often given by the King or Queen – whether it is to save a village from marauders or to rid a forest of boggarts.

It is worth noting that knights can be either men or women.

While knights write with all their heart, they do not have the best grasp of language.

Penmanship: Average
Language: Poor
Heart: Good



The Poet

The poet is a master of language – able to create beauty with just a quill and parchment.

Many poets form literary groups, or Poet Corners, where they meet and discuss their works. Some will even read out loud their epic works in front of an audience for payment.

Because the poet is more concerned with the words on the page rather than how they are presented, their penmanship isn't the best.

Penmanship: Poor
Language: Good
Heart: Average



The Aristocrat

The aristocracy represents the most wealthy and privileged people in society. They have everything they could ever need – stately homes, valuable trinkets and servants at their disposal.

Naturally aristocrats have a high standing in society, although not all are respected as many are seen as pompous and arrogant, throwing their money away on frivolous things rather than aiding those less fortunate.

Penmanship: Good
Language: Poor
Heart: Average



The Scholar

Scholars are the great minds of the world – studying subjects like mathematics, literature, botany and geography.

The halls of universities are packed with scholar, some of which teach while others study their discipline in the library.

Scholars are well-educated, so their grasp of language is second-to-none.

Penmanship: Average
Language: Good
Heart: Poor



The Courtier

Walking the halls of power, the courtier is a social butterfly who aims to climb the ranks through flattery and intrigue. They live within the walls of palaces and castles, aiding the monarchy with their duties.

Courtiers are experts at winning people over and gaining their trust, although they are known to play people off against each other through deception in order to get ahead.

Penmanship: Poor
Language: Average
Heart: Good



Choose your skill

Now you have chosen your character, you need to select a skill. Skills can be used once per scenario, potentially giving you an advantage when writing your letter. There are three skills in the game:

Inspiration: Gain +1 dice to a Language Test

Illumination: Gain +1 dice to a Penmanship Test

Augmentation: Gain +1 dice to a Heart Test



Playing the Game

This section will explain how to play a game of Quill, from rolling on your attributes to totalling up your Letter Score.

A game of Quill begins with a scenario, which you can find further on in this book. The scenario sets out who you are writing to and why you are writing to them (the Profile), any special rules that apply to that specific scenario (Rules of Correspondence), and the words that you will be using as part of your letter (The Ink Pot).

In Quill your aim is to write a letter using the words in The Ink Pot and get the highest score at the end of the scenario. You have five paragraphs to achieve this and in each paragraph you must use one of the words from The Ink Pot. You can augment words with Flourishes to gain extra points and after every paragraph you must make a Penmanship test to find out how well presented your letter is.

It is entirely up to you what you want to write in each paragraph, as long as you are following the story presented in the Profile and using the words in the Ink Pot. Because the Ink Pot contains more than five words you can play the same scenario again and write an entirely different letter.

The Profile

The Profile is the first thing you will need to read. The Profile details the recipient of your letter and a short explanation of why you are writing to them. You should refer back to the Profile when writing your letter.

Rules of Correspondence

The Rules of Correspondence details any special rules that the scenario contains. Such rules will usually affect the rolls that you make during play. For example, one scenario may have a rule that because of the superior parchment that you are using you may roll one extra die when testing for Penmanship. Make sure you remember any effects listed under the Rules of Correspondence because they can heavily impact your letter.

The Ink Pot

The Ink Pot contains all the words that you can use to structure you letter in order to score points. Words are presented as such: Wood/Emerald Forest. The first word is called the **Inferior Word** and the second is called the **Superior Word**. The aim is to fill your letter with Superior Words, as these score points. Inferior Words do not. Note that sometimes a Superior or Inferior Word may consist of multiple words.

How to Score Points

There are three ways to score points in the game:

- Use Superior Words from the Ink Pot. A Superior Word is worth 1 point.
- Be successful in a Penmanship test when you have finished a paragraph. A successful Penmanship test is worth 1 point.
- Flourish words with adjectives or adverbs using Heart tests. A Flourished Superior Word is worth 2 points. A Flourished Inferior Word is worth -1 point.

The Flow of Play

In Quill you must write five paragraphs, each containing one word from the Ink Pot. When you want to add a word, you must roll your Language dice – also called a Language Test. Any 5 or 6 is a success – you can add a Superior Word to your paragraph and gain 1 point. Anything lower and you must add an Inferior Word and score no points. You may add any word you want, but once it has been used you cannot use it again.

Flourishes

Flourishes add an adverb or adjective (i.e. a descriptive word) to enhance the word you choose. For example, 'stallion' could be augmented to 'white stallion'. To augment a word you must make a Heart Test **before** you roll your Language dice to draw from the Ink Pot. To do this, roll your Heart dice. Any 5 or 6 is a success, meaning that you can add a Flourish to the word. If the word turns out to be a Superior Word, you score 2 points for both the enhancement and the word. If the word is an Inferior Word, you reduce your total score by 1.

Penmanship Tests

Every time you finish a paragraph, you must make a Penmanship Test. To do this, roll your Penmanship dice, any 5 or 6 is a success and you gain 1 point.

Using a Skill

You may use a skill once per scenario at any time. Just make a note that you have used the skill.

Scoring

When you have finished your letter, total up your Letter score. Each scenario will have its own consequences section when it comes to scoring, showing how the recipient responds to your letter. Each consequence will be different depending on the scenario, but the scoring is always the same:

Less than 5 points: The letter is received unsuccessfully. There will be negative consequences.

5 to 7 points: The letter has a tepid reception. There will be negative and positive consequences.

8 to 10 points: The letter has a favourable reception. There will be positive consequences.

11+ points: The letter has an excellent reception. There will be very positive consequences.



SCRIPTORIUM MONK AT WORK. (From *Lacroix*.)

Scenarios

The Archduke

Profile

- You are corresponding with the Archduke Godfrey, a powerful member of the royal family who is known for his serious demeanour.
- You are writing to give your condolences for the passing of his sister, Mary of Linchester. She came down with the consumption and passed a week ago. You were acquainted with her, having been in the same school when you were young. You will bring up your past and what you both did when you were children.

Rules of Correspondence

- Courtiers and Aristocrats gain an extra Heart die in this scenario
- You are using a superior parchment in this missive. Gain an extra Penmanship die.

Ink Pot

Climbing Trees/ Scaling Oaks
Death/ Passing
Teachers/ Scholars
Rode Horses/ Rode Stallions
Town/ Riverton
Ducks/ Mallards
Angels/ Seraphim
Fields/ Heather Fields
Church/ Cathedral of Light
Young Boy/ Young Harold of Whent

Consequences

Less than 5 points: The Archduke is disgusted by your letter. You have lost his respect and will no longer be in contact with you.

5 to 7 points: The Archduke responds kindly, but is quick to criticise your letter. You will unlikely hear from him for some months.

8 to 10 points: The Archduke thanks you for your kind letter. He invites you over next week to stay on his estate.

11+ points: The Archduke thanks you profusely for your excellent letter and promises that you will be repaid for your kindness with a gift of great worth.

The Art Dealer

Profile

- You are corresponding with Christina Bowbridge, renowned art dealer who is known for her enthusiastic personality and adoration of the monarchy.
- You are writing to inquire about buying a portrait of Prince Edward IV, however you have heard rumours that this painting could be a fake, but you must find this information from Christina without offending her.

Rules of Correspondence

- Ms Bowbridge likes to be impressed with beautiful calligraphy so you must take care. When taking a Penmanship test, re-roll the highest die and take the lowest number.

Ink Pot

The Prince/ His Royal Highness Prince Edward IV

Fake/ Reproduction

Colours/ Spectrum

I'm sorry/ I apologise profusely

Fountain/ Great Fountain of Aleah

Look at/ Inspect

Skill/ Esteemed expertise

My mum/ My dear mother

Signature/ Inscription

Tick you off/ Offend you

Consequences

Less than 5 points: Christina takes great offence to your letter and responds with a scathing letter about your character. She will not sell you the painting...ever.

5 to 7 points: Christina's response is mild, but she has obviously taken some offence. She will sell the painting but for double the price.

8 to 10 points: Christina is pleased with your letter and responds enthusiastically. She clearly has taken little offence and will sell you the painting.

11+ points: Christina is overwhelmed by your letter and wishes to give you the painting as a gift.

The Father

Profile

- You are corresponding with Mr Anthony Winsborough, an old friend of yours, whose son, Rupert, was found dead near your residences.
- You are writing to inform Anthony of his son's death. You must be sensitive and explain what happened and how you found Rupert.

Rules of Correspondence

- Anthony would prefer to hear this news from a person of the cloth. Monks and nuns gain an extra die on Language for this scenario.

Ink Pot

Your boy/ Your dear son
Corpse/ Body
Bawdy house/ Drinking establishment
Brutal/ Harrowing
I'm sorry/ My infinite condolences
At peace/ In heaven
A guard/ The police
Sadness/ Sorrow
Rain/ Downpour
Box/ Coffin

Consequences

Less than 5 points: Anthony responds aggressively, blaming you for not being there for him and for not caring. You no longer hear from Anthony.

5 to 7 points: Anthony's is clearly disappointed in how you have relayed the information to him, but he does not blame you.

8 to 10 points: Anthony thanks you for telling him about his son and invites you to his funeral.

11+ points: Anthony commends you for your letter and wishes you to speak at his son's funeral.

The King

Profile

- You are corresponding with King Gerald V, who you have only met on one occasion. He is a tyrant and unloved by the populace.
- You are writing to inform the King of a suspicious fellow you have seen about town who you believe to be a spy. You must convince him that you are not a raving lunatic and to take your concerns seriously, while being cordial.

Rules of Correspondence

- The King require the very best letter. You must reroll Heart and Penmanship tests and take the second rolls.
- You are using a high quality parchment and seal. Gain an extra Penmanship die.
- Courteers gain an extra Heart die this scenario.

Ink Pot

Gerald/ Your Majesty
Smithy/ Blacksmith
Funny man/ Curious individual
Hidden/ Concealed
Poison/ Deadly Nightshade
Big bloke/ Imposing man
Cow house/ Barn
Furry lip/ Moustache
Buggered face/ Scarred visage
Worrying/ Alarming

Consequences

Less than 5 points: The King does not respond. Several days after you sent your missive you are visited by the royal guard and brought to prison for your disrespectful letter.

5 to 7 points: You receive a letter from the captain of the royal guard thanking you, but she does not believe you and does not wish you to write again.

8 to 10 points: You receive a letter from a senior official close to the King thanking you. You also receive a monetary reward in the letter.

11+ points: The King writes to you personally with great thanks. He has positioned his guard close by and the spy will be caught. You are invited to the King's court as a guest and hero.